

The University of Chicago

**THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MET-
ROPOLITAN AREA OF CHICAGO**

**A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

**By
SPENCER D. PARRATT**

**Private Edition, Distributed by
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CHAPTER III

THE TWENTY-SEVEN GOVERNMENTS OF THE INNER CITY OF CHICAGO

The governmental confusion in the Chicago Area begins at the center and extends to the circumference. The city corporate of Chicago, the County of Cook, and the whole region illustrate progressively the stages in the decentralization and disintegration of government in this great community.

A look at central Chicago and a look at Cook County may well precede the analysis of the region as a whole.

The city of Chicago itself contains within its limits no less than 27 independent taxing bodies, including the greater part of three large agencies—the County of Cook, the Sanitary District, and the Forest Preserve District. Twenty of the 27 governments including the city corporate, the Board of Education, the Lincoln Park, West Park, and South Park districts, and 15 minor park districts are entirely within the city limits. Foremost is, of course, the city of Chicago with its elective council and mayor. The Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium is a separate body with an independent tax rate but is fairly well controlled through appointment by the mayor, as is the board of inspectors of the House of Correction.

The Board of Education consists of 11 members who are appointed by the mayor for five-year terms, but not removable by him, and may go on their own independent way, financially and otherwise—and do from time to time. But their expenditures, at one time approaching \$100,000,000 a year, and their basic interests are intimately related to the life of Chicago.¹ The Public Library Board, with 9 members, is likewise appointed by the mayor, and has its own independent budget.

¹ In 1931, the school budget amounted to \$101,418,641.75, but in 1932 a drastic economy program cut it to \$75,180,263.45.

The 3 large park boards—South, West, and Lincoln—and 19 smaller ones are wholly independent of the city, although the recreation problem is primarily one that interests the whole community. The Lincoln Park and West Park boards are appointed by the governor of the state, and raise and spend their own funds without any control whatever from Chicago. The South Park Board is appointed by the judges of the Circuit Court of Cook County, and is likewise entirely independent of the municipality of Chicago. The 19 small park commissions are elected in small districts and enjoy complete autonomy from the city.² The annual budget of these Boards has been around \$5,000,000.

The Sanitary District of Chicago, organized primarily to deal with Chicago's sewage problem, is governed by a board of 9 trustees elected by the voters of the District which now has jurisdiction over territory including 60 suburban cities and villages in Cook County in addition to Chicago. Its annual budget, which has exceeded seventy million dollars is expended by the trustees (sometimes with catastrophic results) without any control by the City. The District has acquired renown in extravagance of expenditure and in political irresponsibility, but it should also be known for the scope of its undertakings. Established in 1889-90 with an area of 185 square miles, an assessed valuation of only \$217,000,000, and an annual expenditure of less than \$70,000, it has grown to over 440 square miles, with an assessed valuation of almost \$4,500,000,000 in 1930 and a budget of \$73,946,000 in 1931. Up to 1932, it had expended the sum of \$300,000,000, and its future construction plan alone calls for the outlay of \$20,000,000 per year for the next four years. Originally the District was an agency almost entirely concerned with the city of Chicago. Ninety-two per cent of its area and 96 per cent of its population was found within the city in 1890. Now but 48 per cent of its area and 86 per cent of its population and its wealth is in the city. The District has expanded from its

² Four of these districts cut the City boundary line, but lie chiefly within Chicago.

original size to a government of metropolitan proportions and of Regional significance.³

Finally comes Cook County, with 85 per cent of its population and 84 per cent of its wealth lying within the boundaries of the city of Chicago; but Cook County is an entirely independent taxing and governing body. Its 15 county commissioners administer important affairs within the limits of the city. Its assessing authorities value the property of the city and collect its taxes. Its sheriff and deputies are independent of the city police force. It administers public welfare services for the county. Its county judge passes upon important problems of Chicago, not the least of which are election affairs, administered by a Board of Election Commissioners, chosen by him.

The government of the inner Chicago is thus a combination of 7 main agencies, each of which raises and spends money, each of which administers affairs of very grave importance in the life of the community—schools, parks, water and sewage, welfare and justice, taxation; all these are in the city but not of it. All these agencies distribute and divide the central functions of local government among them.

To this there must be added the municipal court with judges to the number of 37, together with a chief clerk and bailiff, all elected by the voters of Chicago, but not under the control of

³ In 1890, approximately 1,150,000 people lived in the District, its assessed valuation was \$217,458,360.00, its area was 185 square miles, and its expenditures amounted to \$67,649.33. The city's population in 1890 was 1,099,850, its assessed valuation was \$219,354,368.00, and its area 169.84 square miles. In 1930, the population of the District had risen to 3,901,569, its area to 442.35 square miles, and its assessed valuation to \$4,404,063,447.00. Chicago in 1930 had 3,376,438 inhabitants, 210.74 square miles of territory, and an assessed valuation of \$3,788,915,049.00. Up to 1932, the Chicago Sanitary District had spent a total of at least \$297,183,818.30. This figure refers to governmental costs or net expenditures.

These figures were obtained from a combination of sources. The tax rate books of the county and the *Proceedings of the Board of Trustees* of the District as far back as 1890 were examined. The District engineers and financial officers helped in gathering data directly from the records. See also, The Sanitary District of Chicago, *Engineering Works*, 1928; *Annual Appropriation Bill*, 1932.

the city government. The finances and administration of this court are independent of the municipality, and attempted control on the part of the city of Chicago is almost always zealously resisted by the judicial group.

If we extend the lines somewhat farther out to include all of Cook County, we find the confusion growing greater as the limits are extended. The County of Cook has a population of 3,982,123 in an area of 933 square miles, with property to the taxable value of \$4,516,485,826 (1930). The number of independent governments in this area reaches the total of 419.

The government of the county consists of a board of 15 commissioners (10 from Chicago and 5 outside) and a series of 13 elective offices, surviving from a half-century ago. Nor does this include, 20 Circuit Court judges, 28 Superior Court judges, a county judge, and a judge of the Probate Court. The Forest Preserve District, a park district primarily intended to take care of the outer belt park system of Chicago, is coterminous with the county, but is an independent unit composed of the county commissioners acting *ex officio* and with separate financial authority.

But this is only the beginning of county complexity, for we must now include the Sanitary District of Chicago, the 20 governments totally within Chicago, and the 4 park districts sprawling across the city's borders. Then we must take notice of 88 municipalities scattered through the county area outside Chicago, of 30 townships, of 194 school districts, of 34 small park districts, of 3 sanitary and 40 drainage districts, of 2 mosquito-abatement districts, 1 health district, all within the limits of the County of Cook.

An effort was made to introduce some element of unity into the government of the county by building up the powers of the president of the County Board through the veto power and through a range of appointing power.⁴ To some extent this attempt was successful in emphasizing the importance of greater unity in the scattered affairs of Cook County. But this unit is

⁴ See the acts of 1874 and 1893 (*Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 34, sec. 64).

still greatly disorganized. It remains with a central board of 15, and alongside it a series of 13 elective offices chosen by the voters and not responsible to the Board. This list includes the state's attorney, the sheriff, the recorder, the coroner, the treasurer, the county superintendent of schools, the county clerk, the clerks of the Circuit, Superior, Probate, Criminal and Appellate courts, and even the county surveyor, each of whom is independent of all the others and of the Board itself in most matters. The duties and responsibilities of these officials are largely set forth in the statutes of the state and the constitution, and they are not subject to the administrative supervision of the County Board or of its president.

To increase the confusion and irresponsibility, the judges of the Circuit Court of Cook County, 20 in number, have the singular authority, conferred by the Illinois Constitution itself, to fix the number of employees in the county fee offices, while the compensation of these employees is determined by the County Board.⁵ With the best of intentions the framers of this constitutional provision set up what proved to be a formula of confusion in county finance.

Nor are the numerous towns or other minor subdivisions of the county subject to central control by the officials of the county with some exceptions, as in the case of schools. But in the main the 419 governments are free to pursue their own way, independent of any effective supervision.

The central core of the city government is simple beside the disintegration of the government of Cook County. Adapted perhaps to the needs of a rural community a half-century ago, the county has completely outgrown its bounds, and stands as a classic type of disorganization, so grotesque from the point of view of administration that no one could even have imagined so absurd a caricature of responsible government.

⁵ *Illinois Constitution*, art. x, sec. 9.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWO HUNDRED SISTER-CITIES

A yet broader look at the Chicago Region,¹ which we may take for purposes of convenience as 50 miles in every direction from State and Madison streets in the Loop, discloses a territory which is for many purposes a convenient social and economic unit, an area in which common interests of many sorts bind the residents together in close bonds. Residents of Evanston or Oak Park who find themselves some distance away from Chicago identify themselves properly as citizens of Chicago. "Really in Chicago you know," they explain. Technically they may be outside the invisible line that separates them from the legal limits of the metropolis, but practically, industrially, socially, they are parts of the great city, and claim it as their own.

Ringed around the city of Chicago are 203 other municipalities, ranging in population from Gary with 100,426 inhabitants to Dune Acres with only 12.

More than this, 100 cities, towns, and villages form an unbroken conglomerate, reaching through two states. Persons to the number of 4,246,227 or 87 per cent of the Regional population live in this mass of contiguous settlements, stretching north to within 14 miles of the Wisconsin boundary and east to within 23 miles of the Michigan line. For 63 miles the shore of Lake Michigan has been incorporated into municipalities.

One might start in the center of Chicago, at the intersection of State and Madison streets, and travel 26 miles west to the boundary of the city of Wheaton; or one might go 28 miles south to the limits of the village of Steger and not set foot outside of incorporated territory. A trip might be made from the town of Hobart, Indiana, to Lake Bluff, Illinois, a distance of 65 miles,

¹ Following primarily the Chicago Regional Planning Association's original lines; *supra*, p. 8.

without once being outside the boundaries of some city, town, or village. Sixteen separate municipalities would be traversed on the way. Moreover, this journey could be made without deviating materially from a straight line. Three different counties would be entered.

The contiguous mass of Chicago and its 99 suburbs does not include all of the municipalities within the Metropolitan Region. There are 104 others. In a dozen cases 2 municipalities are contiguous. In three instances clusters of 3 are to be found. Short distances separate municipal units in many instances.

TABLE IX
NUMBER OF CITIES, VILLAGES, AND INCORPORATED
TOWNS IN THE REGION BY DECADES

	Cook County	Du Page County	Lake County Illinois	Lake County Indiana	Remainder of Region	Total in Region
1900.....	52	11	11	6	50	130
1910.....	66	12	18	15	55	166
1920.....	76	13	18	18	55	180
1930.....	89	18	21	16	60	204

The great contiguous mass is gradually expanding to include other units. Of the 14 miles between the contiguous chain of lake shore municipalities and the Wisconsin boundary, but $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of lake front lie outside of any city, town, or village. Of the 23 miles to the Michigan border, only 12 miles is unincorporated. The rate of suburban incorporation and annexation to existing municipalities indicates that these gaps will soon be filled. Chicago and its solidly incorporated suburban area threatens to reach into parts of four states.

The steady growth in the number of municipalities within the Region is shown by Table IX, illustrating the steady upward climb of the sister-cities within the shadow of Chicago.

The law is adapted to the creation of an indefinite number of separate cities, towns, and villages, since local initiative is given a high degree of freedom. There need be only 100 inhabitants

living within 2 square miles of unincorporated area to constitute a village in Illinois if the right legal formula is followed. Indiana specifies neither territorial nor population minima, except in the case of a community having within its boundaries a Chautauqua assembly or similar institution, which may become incorporated with a population of 100. Incorporated municipalities in Indiana are known as towns or cities, villages having no legal recognition. Wisconsin permits an area less than $\frac{1}{2}$ square mile to constitute a village, providing it has 150 inhabitants.

Cities in each of the three states may be formed from unincorporated territory or organized from villages or towns. One thousand people in Illinois, 2,000 in Wisconsin, and an indefinite number in Indiana, with some differing requirements as to area minima or population density, are the essential prerequisites for cities. In the rapidly filling suburban area of Chicago, village, town, or city requirements of population and area are easily attained, and incorporation of additional municipalities seems inevitable as long as present forces remain in operation and unincorporated area remains in the region.

The technical formula for attaining legal corporate existence varies. In Illinois, fifteen legal voters petition the county judge with jurisdiction over the proposed municipality, and this commences the process of attaining villagehood. Indiana provides that a proposed town must begin with a petition presented to the county board of trustees and signed by at least one-third of the voters concerned. Wisconsin merely requires five resident taxpayers to sign and present a petition to the circuit court. In all the states a referendum vote of the people immediately concerned is necessary before incorporation can be completed.

These incorporated municipalities assume various forms. In Regional Illinois alone there are six major types (Table X).

Twenty-one cities other than Chicago with council-mayor government are organized under the act of 1872 and its amendments. But the fact that cities have been organized under a general law does not mean that they all have the same governmental organization in detail. Even the mayor's term of office

varies. When a city is under 75,000 in population, the mayor's term is two years; when a city reaches 75,000, the mayoralty term may be made four years.

Although considerable local option is permitted in the matter of determining the number of officials, the terms and election dates are fixed by general state laws. Each city is required to elect a city clerk and a city treasurer. Other officials are optional. Only the police magistrate, if one is elected has a term of more than two years. Differences are also reflected in the organization of councils in cities of varying size.

TABLE X
TYPES AND NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES
IN REGIONAL ILLINOIS

Type of Municipality	Number
City council	22
City commission	9
Village commission	2
Village manager	6
Village	135
Town	1
Total	175

If the municipality has less than 200,000 people, it may adopt a commission form of government. Nine cities and two villages in Regional Illinois have adopted this form of organization. Both small and relatively large suburbs have found arguments in its favor. The elected commission consists of five members, with each commissioner at the head of a department of the city administrative system. The legislature has granted with this form of government the local initiative, referendum, and recall.

The legislature has not seen fit, in Illinois, to authorize municipal experimentation with manager government, except in cities or villages with 5,000 or fewer people.² No municipality in the Region has chosen to come under the provisions of this act.

But anomalous as the fact may seem, there are six municipal-

² *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 24, art. xvi.

ities in Illinois with city manager governments, set up under the old law. The Illinois managerial governments are Glencoe, Glenview, Kenilworth, Riverside, Wilmette, and Winnetka. In addition, Highland Park, Hinsdale, Bellwood, Western Springs, and Zion are listed by the International City Managers' Association as unofficial city manager municipalities.³

In each of the above instances the city or village council has contracted with a general manager of municipal business. This has been done through an exercise of general corporate ordinance making powers and has not otherwise affected the organization of government. It is interesting to note that Glencoe and Winnetka still operate under charters granted in 1869, but have superimposed the most advanced form of municipal organization upon this ancient framework, retaining whatever advantages the old charters offered, and combining these with up-to-date administrative organization.

The historic, and by far the most common, type of village government in Illinois has a board of six trustees, presided over by a village president. There is no provision for variation of the number of trustees analogous to the provision for increasing the number of aldermen in city governments as population increases. Should local initiative demand, however, commission government may be adopted under provisions very similar to the commission form provided for cities. As in cities, the number of elected and appointed officials, above a prescribed minimum, is left to local determination. As a matter of fact, the structural organization of villages and cities in Illinois need not be very different, and the title of a municipality indicates little.

Among the types which still further complicate local organization, are specially chartered municipalities. Before the Constitution of 1870 prohibited the practice, municipalities were granted special charters. Some municipalities within the suburban area have retained governmental organizations provided under such old charters. The city of Lake Forest, for example, was chartered in 1869. It enjoys certain privileges in matters of rela-

³ From 1927 to 1932 Wheaton also had a city manager.

tively unrestricted local tax rates. Under its special charter Winnetka may elect two police magistrates, whereas municipalities organized under the general law elect but one. The Lake Forest charter, reflecting the faith in local democracy of the Civil War period, provides annual election of city officials.

Cicero has an old charter denominating it as an incorporated town, although its governmental organization has little to distinguish it from village organization under the general law. Mokena, a tiny village on the extreme fringe of the metropolitan periphery, was the scene of considerable agitation in 1927 in which the question of reincorporation under the general law was uppermost. But the voters elected to retain the historic charter. The value of such charters can easily be overemphasized as is seen in Lake Forest. Two or three other villages with special charters bear testimony that government is much the same today as it was sixty years ago. Amendments to the general Act of 1872 have largely wiped out differences which may have once distinguished "special chartered" from general chartered municipalities in Illinois.

Village and city organization in Illinois has been modified in so many instances and the optional variation carried to such extremes that it is difficult to draw the line of cleavage between city and village types. The presumption that smaller communities exist as villages or towns and that they become cities with expanded population is not supported by the facts. There is the "village" of Oak Park with 63,982 people, under the same law town government, has 66,602 inhabitants. But McHenry, which is a city, has only 1,354 inhabitants. In fact, outside of Chicago, there is not one Regional city in Illinois as large as either Oak Park Village or Cicero Town!

Oak Park is satisfied with village organization, although it now has twelve departments and employs more than 260 people. Hainesville retains its legal status of village, although it has not elected officials for over a quarter of a century. There are "active" villages, however, as small as Romeoville with 133 inhabitants, and Symerton with 77.

Contrast Plano's city government with a population of 1,785 with the village government of Oak Park containing 63,982 inhabitants. Plano elects ten officials—a mayor, clerk, treasurer, police magistrate, and six aldermen. Oak Park elects the same number. But whereas the village of Oak Park maintained a government with twelve departments and 260 employees in 1929, Plano's governmental personnel, other than the elected officials, consisted of one truck driver employed full time and two policemen—one part time at that. The fire department was volunteer and consisted of twelve members, and the health officer, the city attorney, the city plumber, and the fire marshal were part-time officials. Under such conditions the designation of "city" or "village" means little.

Unlike Illinois, Indiana classifies cities into five general groups according to population and taxable wealth. The predominant type of city government in Indiana, as in Illinois, is the council-mayor form. The Indiana law makes more definite provisions for adjusting city government to population than does the Illinois law. Variation in structure is predicated upon a fivefold classification of cities, according to population.

Each of the 9 Indiana cities in the Region elects a mayor, most cities elect treasurers and clerks, and some elect city judges. In small cities, mayors act as city judges; and in certain cities which happen to constitute county seats, the county treasurer acts as *ex officio* treasurer of the corporate city. Other differences in detail might be noted.

The council is elected, partly at large and partly from wards, in Indiana cities. There is graduated variation in numbers of councilmen, with larger cities having larger councils. In the councils of smaller cities is vested the power to determine whether or not the offices of clerk and treasurer should be combined and also the power to determine the need for additional elected officials. But, in general, Indiana cities do not have as great authority to change structural detail as do corresponding cities in Illinois.

All Indiana towns, numbering 19 in the Indiana section of the

Region, have a prescribed form of council-mayor government, although the council is called the board of trustees and is composed of varying numbers of members depending upon the population. Smaller towns have boards of three; larger towns have as many as seven on boards of trustees. The trustees, acting as a board, elect a chairman who holds a position analogous to that of mayor but with less executive discretion. A clerk and treasurer are elected at large, whereas the trustees are elected from wards.

Manager and commission forms of government in Indiana have encountered difficulties since the act of the Indiana legislature permitting commission-manager government was declared unconstitutional in 1929.⁴

Wisconsin contributes a relatively small segment to the Chicago Region, but this area includes the progressive city of Kenosha. No other municipalities are included. Kenosha has a managerial form of government with a board of five members, one of whom acts as chairman and official executive head of the corporate government. In addition, charter provisions in Wisconsin which grant some degree of home rule and local responsibility have helped Kenosha to a relatively competent government.

No better illustration of the absence of governmental planning can be found anywhere than in the organization of the 89 incorporated municipalities of Cook County, or the total of 204 in the Region. Although these are the governments by far the closest to the welfare of the whole metropolitan community, they remain completely independent jurisdictions. Ninety-nine municipalities jut out from Chicago in a contiguous mass of territory including 87 per cent of the inhabitants of the Region. Varying in size and resources, restricted in powers, limited to narrow details of organization laid down by legislatures, these municipalities are able to articulate neither their local governmental needs nor their wider metropolitan interests.

⁴ *Keane v. Remy*, 201 Ind. 286. The commission government of Michigan City was discontinued after this decision.

CHAPTER V

COOK COUNTY AND FOURTEEN OTHERS

But other important governments lie within the Metropolitan Area. Cities after all are sister-cities, municipal corporations, of like flesh with us—contrivances for the advantage of the city-dwellers. County government, on the other hand, is traditionally a rural government, into which urban conditions do not fit so well, but into which urbanites have come. Fifteen counties lie within or around the Metropolitan Region, and the metropolitans must work through them. Two of these counties are entirely within the Region; eight more, 90 per cent within the Region; and five more, partly within the Regional Limits (Table XI).¹

Regional counties were not designed to function under metropolitan conditions; but not one county boundary line in the Region has been changed since 1859, a time when the total population of the Metropolitan Area was but one-third of a million. Obviously, counties were intended for rural conditions and are in no sense adequate units of local governmental action when faced with the requirements of metropolitanism. County government becomes a political anomaly under conditions where over 95 per cent of the constituent population live within the boundaries of some city, town, or village and 75 per cent are classed as urban. It does not and, as organized, cannot meet the increased demands resulting from advanced metropolitan development.

There is a surprising variation among the fifteen Regional counties. Cook, which is outstanding as an example of advanced urbanization, is the most populous of the 3,097 counties in the United States. Contrast Cook County, with four million inhabitants, and Kendall County, with slightly more than 10,000. In population Kendall would be a small county anywhere in Amer-

¹ The United States government includes 16 Illinois counties in its Regional Coordination Zone (*infra*, pp. 71-72).

ica. Paralleling variation in population is diversity in area. Cook County with 933 square miles is more than three times as large as Kenosha County with 282, and the other thirteen counties lie between these extremes. Variation can be stated in terms of population density. With its unquestionable urban supremacy,

TABLE XI
AREA AND POPULATION OF REGIONAL COUNTIES*

County	Number of Regional Inhabitants	Percentage of County's Population in Region	Regional Area (Square Miles)	Percentage of County's Area in Region	Percentage of County's Total Population Which Is Urban
Cook.....	3,982,123	100	933	100	98
DuPage.....	91,998	100	345	100	74
Lake.....	104,387	99	452	99	72
Kane.....	125,327	99	500	95	77
Will.....	109,276	99	790	94	43
Lake (Indiana).....	261,310	99	487	99	92
Porter.....	22,821	99	368	89	35
La Porte.....	54,828	91	205	34	70
Kenosha.....	56,929	90	60	21	79
Kendall.....	9,471	90	234	72	0
McHenry.....	23,845	68	210	34	35
Kankakee.....	13,267	26	200	30	47
Grundy.....	1,885	10	40	9	30
Jasper.....	2,071	15	10	2	21
Newton.....	1,212	12	2	$\frac{1}{2}$	0

* Population figures include all inhabitants of townships included within or touched by the 50-mile line. Figures for Kane, Lake (Illinois), Lake (Indiana), and Porter counties are the total population figures for the county, but the percentages expressed are less than 100 per cent because small parts of a few townships are beyond the 50-mile line. Urban population is, of course, defined as the number of people in incorporated places having 2,500 inhabitants or more.

Cook County had 4,268 people per square mile in 1930. Second to Cook was Lake County, Indiana, with 531. No other Regional county, in 1930, had over 266 inhabitants per square mile, while Kendall has as few as 32.

The officialdom of counties is the classic of diffused and dis-integrated responsibility. It is even difficult to find the traditional threefold powers, so pronounced in the American political systems. Legislative and executive authority are fused in a county board or its equivalent, while the presence of an array of

independent officials confuses the allocation of powers still further.

Nor does the internal organization of the county board itself lead to responsible management of county affairs. In Cook County the president of the board has assumed some degree of leadership, and the members of the board are elected by large instead of small districts. Outside of Cook County, however, the county bodies are almost entirely without unity and responsible leadership. Indiana furnishes the most extreme illustration of the decentralization of power. Counties have two separate bodies in place of a single county board. A county council of seven and a board of three commissioners divide the county powers.

The old theory survives that independent officials check one another in county government as represented in the Regional counties. A county clerk, treasurer, sheriff, prosecuting attorney, surveyor, coroner, and judges are elected in every county in the Region. Illinois counties elect clerks of circuit courts; in Cook County four additional court clerks are elected. In every county, a superintendent of schools is elected, except in Indiana counties where this officer is appointed.

Illinois has made use of the expedient of increasing the number of county offices as population increases. When an Illinois county reaches a population of 60,000, a recorder is added to the ballot. When it reaches 70,000, a probate court judge and clerk make their appearance. Attainment of 75,000 results in the addition of an auditor, although this office, for some unknown reason, is dispensed with when a county attains 300,000. Such efforts might be described as half-hearted attempts to adapt county government to metropolitan conditions.

Disintegration of county government does not end with county boards and the various elective officials. A further horde of appointed officials, boards, commissions, bureaus, and the like add increased complexity. In many instances these appointed officers are independent of the county board and further increase the disunity of county government.

A sampling of this officialdom will illustrate. Every county in

the Region has some form of agency for the review of tax assessments, although this unit appears under different names and with different composition in the various counties. Each county has an official with special authority over poor and dependents; each has a highway superintendent or the equivalent; there are, in addition, boards of canvassers, boards of school examiners, road commissioners, jury commissioners, soldiers' relief commissions, and an endless chain of others.

The historical jurisdiction of counties has been magisterial rather than managerial when compared to cities, towns, or villages. The historical powers of counties might be classified as follows: (1) the levy of taxes and right of borrowing, subject to constitutional and legislative maxima, (2) purchase and ownership of property of limited variety, (3) power to sue and be sued, (4) making of contracts, (5) enforcement of law, both local and state, (6) care of poor, aged, sick and insane, (7) provision for a workhouse or jail, (8) certain powers over the control of plats, and (9) widening and improvement of roads and highways, together with the creation and location of new roads.

Although the above list of powers might have served a rural county, it does not include adequate provision for the services which are demanded of a metropolitan county. County government, even more than city, town, or village government, is dependent on state government. The county, historically, has been to a marked extent the agent of the state. It is unable through its own initiative to expand its powers to cover functions demanded by metropolitan situations. As the conception of governmental obligations has shifted from negative to positive, from magisterial to managerial, the county, with its unresponsive, curtailed, and disintegrated government, has been unable to respond to the pressure of problems far beyond its earlier scope.

State law, often embedded in constitutional provisions, determines the personnel of the important county offices and curbs administrative co-ordination. Terms of office are fixed, usually at one-, two-, or four-year periods with provision that certain officers cannot succeed themselves in office. Even salaries are

determined from state legislative halls, and debt limits and taxation rates are rigidly specified as to maxima. County governments have their hands tied.

Moreover, counties duplicate the functions of city and other local governments. In fact, it will be found that almost any service exercised by the county has its equivalent or counterpart in the functions of the overlapping municipalities serving the same public.

Moreover, there are extensive duplications of city and other local functions by counties. Duplication and reduplication exist in the administration of public welfare, judicial service, law enforcement, civil service. Cook County, for example, has a pension fund, known as the "Cook County Employees' Annuity and Benefit Fund." But the Cook County fund is but one of nine existing within the county, the other eight being divided among the larger governments within its territory. Each of these funds is under the administration of a different body and each has its powers and limitations fixed by separate state laws.

The county remains then in the midst of a modern metropolitan area, as a sad survival of earlier days, which, however happy they may have been, are now hopelessly outgrown. The county continues as a shell which tends to be absorbed in the more vital growth of the greater city.

CHAPTER VI

THE REMINISCENT TOWNSHIPS

The jurisdiction of the fifteen counties is duplicated by another layer of 165 tiny political units, in each of which burns a spark of governmental life in memory of the success of the township in early America. Appearing as a checkerboard of squares and broken squares when presented on a map showing population density, these towns or townships are small, unrelated to community interests, and largely devoid of local patriotisms. The township developed as a unit of local self-government in New England. Under days of Puritan frontier supremacy it evolved as a significant, useful, and coherent community and political unit. Generations later the Chicago Region still retains a blanket patterned after the New England model. Townships, however, were not universal in early American government. The southern colonies, centering around Virginia, developed the county as the elementary political unit. The township did not even exist. Thus it might be said that counties and townships are parallel developments of American government.

As settlements pushed into the interior of the continent, both the county and township theories found adherents. Although the county, as might be expected from the nature of scattered frontier settlement, found greater favor because it was better adapted to larger territorial units, some 18 states have townships as active self-governing units. The three states of the Region are included among this number. It must be admitted that the superimposition of counties and townships over the same territory and people is a historical accident rather than a vital and necessary part of the traditional American hierarchy of governments. Moreover, local autonomy, which made the township or the county flourish when neither existed as a significant community unit, necessarily has been divided in Chicagoland between two independent layers of parallel jurisdictions.

When the Old Northwest, under the Ordinance of 1787, was surveyed for settlement, the Jeffersonian six-mile square was utilized as the unit for parceling land to the incoming settler. It is these old "congressional townships" which form the territorial basis of the "civil towns or townships" of Chicago today. Modifications and variations have taken place through the exigencies of more than a century's struggle to make such tiny, presettlement divisions fit into the political requirements of the days of growth and then of metropolitan development. Parts of squares have been added together; others have been divided. Slightly varying combinations have been organized as "school townships." Only the civil towns or townships have inherited the self-governing remnants of the traditional township, and it is with such units that this chapter is concerned.

Chicagoland's 4,800 square miles pay tribute to 165 "civil townships." Eight of these, within the city of Chicago, have been left with form but not life.¹ They exist as inert units for assessing and collecting taxes by county officials. Having no political significance of their own, they have been omitted from consideration although their past history up to a quarter of a century ago is a part of the political history of Chicago. But outside of the great city's boundaries the township flourishes much as it used to in Chicago.

Several townships have been entirely duplicated in jurisdiction by suburban cities, towns, and villages. Cicero, Oak Park, Berwyn, and River Forest Townships, are coterminous with the boundaries of municipalities having the same names. What was formerly Ridgeville Township is now encompassed by the city and township of Evanston. Other townships, particularly those contiguous to, or partly within, Chicago, or in northern Lake County, Indiana, have found their territorial domain absorbed in more than one municipality. Unlike the townships entirely within Chicago, these have retained their full quota of officials and ordinary township powers.

¹ These are Hyde Park, Jefferson, Lake, Lake View, North Chicago, South Chicago, West Chicago, and Rogers Park.

Township boundary lines divide a large number of suburban municipalities into two or more parts; they disrupt rather than unite the natural urban neighborhood. No legal provision adapts townships to changing community interests. No matter how disadvantageously a township is located in relation to natural community interests, it retains its historical identity, going through the forms of holding meetings and of electing its officials.

Civil townships, as elements in the governmental picture, merit some attention, if only to suggest the ridiculous extremes to which archaic localisms can plunge a modern metropolis. When one considers the density of metropolitan population and its interlocking interests, it is almost beyond reason that it should still be burdened with the election of a miscellaneous array of township officials such as clerks, assessor, justices, and constables. The law still provides the formalities for viva voce town meetings, where all the electors assemble and transact miscellaneous business.

The imagination is strained, however, in attempting to appreciate the effectiveness of an average Cook County township meeting, which according to law is to be held on the first Tuesday in April of each year. Should the entire voting population of the township congregate, as might be expected under the New England system, a congregation of some twenty thousand would clamor to transact governmental business. Some townships, such as Joliet, Cicero, or Aurora, would be outstanding spectacles of local democracy by direct methods—if the system worked. Even in the more rural parts of the Region, the number coming together for such a family discussion would necessitate modern loud speakers and amplifiers.

Township officialdom is not uniform among the townships of the entire Region. In Illinois and Indiana the township board found in Wisconsin is replaced by a single official. His title varies and some townships know him as trustee; others as supervisor. Illinois township supervisors have elected assistants, the number increasing with increased population totals. In Cook County each township has an elected tax-collector. This office has been

abolished in the less populous Illinois counties. Indiana elects an advisory board of three which corresponds to the board of auditors in Illinois, but has some additional budgetary power which formerly was vested in the now defunct town meeting. Other variations in inconspicuous and unimportant offices are to be found, such as drainage commissioners, pound keepers, fence viewers, Canada thistle commissioners, highway supervisors. The number of justices of the peace and constables varies according to population.

It is hardly surprising that inconspicuous and poorly paid township offices are not eagerly sought. The spirit of local democracy which justified the existence of township government has ceased to lend honor to township offices in modern times. Indeed, a law still on the books provides that "if any person elected to the office of supervisor, town clerk, assessor or commissioner of highways shall refuse to serve, he shall forfeit to the town the sum of \$25."²

Yet township governments are not too insignificant to have the typical appendages of boards, commissions, and "titled" appointed officers. Illinois townships have boards of auditors or boards of appointment, consisting of justices of the peace, the supervisor, and town clerk, with authority to fill vacancies and audit township accounts. Quite a number of townships have appointed thistle commissioners or weed inspectors. Wisconsin townships may appoint park commissions and special boards to administer sewage and garbage disposal, with regulatory powers in respect to public sanitation.

Records of activities are presumed to be kept; but these are sometimes missing or far behind date. One supervisor in an Illinois township was unable to discover where his records were, since his wife "does the writing part" and she was not at home. In another instance a newly elected supervisor was unable to say just what he did, having done nothing during his month of service. A supervisor had obtained no records from his predecessor and considered it unjust that he should be asked why he had

² *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 139, sec. 89.

none of his own. Few township officials are found who maintain what might pass for an office.

As might be expected from the fact that townships and counties are parallel rather than subordinate and superior governments, there is much duplication of powers. The list of subjects over which townships have jurisdiction shows this overlapping clearly. Townships exercise some jurisdiction over schools. Townships have some authority over roads and bridges, although the county is forging ahead as the administrative unit for this purpose. Again duplicating counties, townships are charged with the care of the poor and destitute, and both have general law-enforcing officers, the sheriff and the constable.

As a matter of fact, the township officer who has retained most power, the township assessor, may also be regarded as a county official. While the financial problems of local government have become more complicated, the general property-taxing machinery with the township as its assessing basis and the county as its administrative unit has been retained. Only recently have basic changes been undertaken. The abolition of the board of assessors and the board of review, the limitations placed upon the powers of township assessors, and the reorganization of the assessing system in Cook County in 1932 are signs of the trend toward centralized county control.³ On the whole, the township assessing system has, in operation, been characterized by competitive undervaluation of property among the separate taxing districts of the Metropolitan Region and by inexpert administrative practices. Where the metropolitan township fails to give adequate service in the most important function it has retained, and where its duties are being taken over by county officials, it loses entirely its warrant for existence.

Chicago was assessed at about 29 per cent of actual value

³ *Laws of Illinois*, First Special Session, 1931-32, pp. 65-85. The precise relationships between the county assessor and the independent township assessors in Cook County are now being worked out in practice. The county assessor conducts county-wide assessment in respect to corporations, trusts, banks, and estates, and revises the work of the local township assessors in respect to other property.

down to the 1927 valuation. Suburban townships were assessed at an average of about 15–20 per cent of actual value.⁴ This meant that Chicagoans paid a relatively higher tax rate on their property in areas larger than the township or city. For instance, the owner of a piece of property in Chicago worth ten thousand dollars paid almost twice as much taxes to the state of Illinois as the owner of a piece of property worth the same amount in an “average” suburban township. This inequality allowed the suburbs to thrust a disproportionately larger share of state and county taxes on Chicago, while for local purposes the local rates could be adjusted to the valuation.

The survival of the township collector in Cook County is another feature of this local government which does not tend to establish confidence in its adaptability to metropolitan conditions. The functions of this official have been transferred within the city of Chicago to the county treasurer, but still continue in the territory outside the city and within the county for certain purposes. The decentralization of administration and the scales of compensation are causes of relative inefficiency and discontent.

Townships have never been a success when divorced from the conditions which made them. When cutting across municipal boundaries they have developed no local patriotisms. In an urbanized metropolis the township meeting becomes a parody on self-government. Simply stated, the township serves no useful purpose which could not better be served by subordinating its functions to those larger units to which clings some vestige of community interests. As a local unit for caring for roads and schools, providing police protection, or for enforcing sanitation and health measures, the township is hopelessly small and too unrelated to vital community interests. Beyond dabbling in the taxation system, townships have little positive governmental

⁴ Data from estimates obtained from Harry S. Cutmore, in charge of reassessing Cook County in 1928–29. His estimations are based, in part, upon studies by private appraisers, by economists of Northwestern University, and investigators for the Illinois legislative joint revenue commission.

significance. The fate of the Chicago townships, where functions have been reallocated between city and county, suggests the most hopeful destiny for the time-honored township unit. Here townships have been abolished and no one has ever felt any loss. This may be the fate of the remaining townships in the metropolitan community.

CHAPTER VII

THE SEVENTY-FOUR PARK GOVERNMENTS OF THE REGION

No less than seventy-four independent park and forest preserve governments—extensive city districts and small neighborhood districts, village-wide districts and county-wide forest preserve districts—add to the multiplicity of governing agencies in the Chicago Region. These districts tax, spend, and borrow; maintain parks, personnel, equipment, and police; make rules and pass quasi-criminal ordinances independently of one another. Yet when taken together they are expected to maintain recreation facilities for citizens whose play area is coming to be the entire Metropolitan Region. Nor do the separate park and forest districts exhaust the complexities of the system. State governments maintain small parks in Illinois, and in Indiana the Dunes State Park at the tip of Lake Michigan is one of the most magnetic recreation spots for the Region's population. Cities, towns, and villages, maintain parks. School districts supply another set of playgrounds and recreational centers over parts of the metropolis, particularly in centers of greatest population density. In brief, there are over one thousand separate local governments engaged, or with power to engage, in providing parks and recreational facilities for the Region.

The complexity of the metropolitan park system is first of all illustrated in the city of Chicago itself. Within the city limits there are three large park districts and nineteen smaller districts. Park facilities, moreover, are maintained by the city corporate itself and by the Board of Education. Above these the Cook County Forest Preserve District adds a county system of park and forestry sites. Finally, the state of Illinois maintains a tiny memorial park in memory of Stephen A. Douglas at Thirty-fifth Street and the lake.

THE SEVENTY-FOUR PARK GOVERNMENTS 45

In 1869 the legislature of the State of Illinois truncated Chicago into three separate park districts. This division marked the beginning of park governments in the Region. Each of the three districts created was the product of a private act of the legislature. All three acts were passed within a single month and all three were different. One district was designed to serve the northern section of the city and was named after the recently martyred Lincoln. A second was created to afford facilities to

TABLE XII
RESOURCES AND FACILITIES OF PARK DISTRICTS IN CHICAGO

DISTRICTS	AREA*		POPULATION†		ASSESSED VALUATION‡		PARK ACREAGE§		BOULEVARDS	
	Square Miles	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Dollars	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Miles	% of Total
South Park . . .	92.5	43.9	1,231,000	36.4	1,778,264,809	48.1	2867.0	56.6	115.19	56.6
West Park	35.5	16.8	978,000	29.0	736,964,979	19.9	823.5	16.3	54.84	27.0
Lincoln Park . . .	14.7	7.0	493,000	14.6	623,506,249	16.9	800.0	15.8	22.26	11.0
Small parks ¶ . . .	50.5	24.0	622,950	18.5	523,123,092	14.1	574.6	11.3	10.80	5.3
Non-park area . .	17.5	8.3	51,488	1.5	32,639,577	1.0			.25	.1
Total	210.7	100.0	3,376,438	100.0	3,694,498,706	100.0	5065.1	100.0	203.34	100.0

* As of July, 1932.

† Closely estimated from 1930 Census. See *Daily News Almanac*, 1932.

‡ 1929 valuation, made available in 1931 on account of delay occasioned by reassessment.

§ Does not include parks and playgrounds maintained by city, Board of Education, or Forest Preserve District.

|| As of January 1, 1930. See *Daily News Almanac*, 1932.

¶ Includes all small parks wholly within Chicago and Chicago's share of parks crossing city boundary line.

the western part of the city, receiving the name of West Chicago Park. The third was organized for the southern section under the title of South Park. These districts play an important part in the political as well as the recreational life of the metropolis and require further analysis.

Among these three districts, great inequalities exist. The South Park District is in the best strategical position, as an examination of Table XII will show. Since it covers the rich Loop section as well as the southern district of the city, South Park embraces 48.1 per cent of the assessed valuation of the city. But while it possesses half the city's wealth, almost half the city's

area (43.9 per cent), and over half the park acreage (56.6 per cent), it contains only 36.4 per cent of the city's population. West Park, on the other hand, is in the weakest position. It embraces 29 per cent of the population, but it includes only 19.9 per cent of the wealth, 16.8 per cent of the area, and 16.3 per cent of the park acreage. The Lincoln Park District has less than half the area of West Park and half the population of West Park, but it has about the same resources and park acreage at its disposal.¹ The West Park District embraces some of the neediest sections of the city; its housing conditions probably make its park needs heaviest, yet it can afford and offer least.

Thus the presence of three great park districts in the city causes disintegration of control, results in gross inequalities in the distribution of park facilities, and fails to strike a balance between park resources and recreational requirements.

Dissimilarity in resources among the three great park districts of Chicago is accompanied by variations in their political relations with the city. Although the three park systems were created in the same year, there seems to have been no attempt to set up a uniform plan of political responsibility to the metropolis. The West Park Commissioners were appointed by the governor.² So were the South Park Commissioners, but their successors were to be named by the Circuit Court of Cook County.³ The Lincoln Park Commissioners, on the other hand, were named by the legislature in the original act, and their successors, too, were to be appointed by the Circuit Court.⁴ The Circuit Court, however, never had a chance to appoint Lincoln Park Commissioners, for two years after the original act was passed, the power of appointment was vested in the governor,⁵ as in the case of the

¹ This distribution is, of course, exclusive of equalizations resulting from the maintenance of city and Board of Education parks and playgrounds.

² *Private Laws of the State of Illinois*, 1869, I, 342-43. West Park Commissioners were also required to be residents of West Town, while no local residence requirements were included in the other two acts.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

⁵ *Public Laws of the State of Illinois*, 1871-72, pp. 592-93.

West Park Commissioners. A similar attempt to vest the appointment of South Park Commissioners in the hands of the governor, in 1881, failed,⁶ and today South Park still differs from the other two in this respect.

In 1869, when the South Park District was established, the Cook County Circuit Court had but a single judge, and it is possible that a degree of unbiased responsibility might perhaps have been expected from such an appointing authority, especially since the park district was at first of minor importance in the game of politics. Today the twenty judges of the Circuit Court choose the five South Park Commissioners. Responsibility which might have existed in 1869 has been dissipated in a complicated game of party and spoils politics. In fact, many of the Circuit Court judges vote according to political expediency, and down to this day the South Park is a prize of politics. That the fundamental principle of democratic responsibility is ignored is evident from the fact that the majority of voters for Circuit Court judges live and cast their votes outside of the South Park District and most of the judges reside elsewhere than in the District.⁷

The South Park is not a prize to be despised. Its budget has exceeded twelve million dollars. South Park has an average of around two thousand employees, and large expenditures for improvements. It would be beyond human expectation to presume indifference to the political possibilities of this government. And the guiding star in the choice of commissioners has often been the bargaining power of political factions. Both the Circuit Court and the South Park District government are menaced under such a situation.

⁶ The amending act (*ibid.*, 1881, p. 116) was held unconstitutional in *Cornell v. The People*, 107 Ill. 372. The court held, after going into a rather metaphysical definition of "corporate authorities," that a different mode of appointment could not be imposed without the assent of the voters, since the voters had by the original referendum created the municipal corporation. The Lincoln Park Act had gone into effect without a referendum. See *infra*, p. 48.

⁷ In December, 1932, thirteen of the twenty Circuit Court judges resided outside the District.

While the South Park District is administered by a board of five commissioners, juggled into office through political factions represented on the Circuit Court of the county, the West Chicago District and the Lincoln Park District are under the administrative control of boards of seven, designated by the governor. As in the South Park District, the boards of commissioners have power to govern, manage, and direct all parks and boulevards, to levy taxes and assessments, to pass ordinances, to appoint officers, including a police force, to exercise the power of eminent domain, and to incur debts within the limitations fixed by the legislature—limitations the legislature is constantly urged to narrow because of the growing financial needs of the Chicago park districts.⁸

Lincoln Park and West Park, like South Park are political plums; and the appointment of their boards by the governor does not eliminate partisan considerations. In fact, the governor holds, through this appointing power, the key to a tremendous patronage-dispensing organization in the heart of the Metropolitan Region. Through his position he has been able to "line up" the support of local representatives and senators. A governor has merely to threaten to take, give, or "distribute" the fruits of this potentially powerful patronage and certain factions and individuals become his political allies.

In addition to these 3 major park districts, there are in Chicago 19 satellite park districts. These smaller districts cannot be disregarded for park planning either in the metropolis itself or in its wider metropolitan surroundings. They embrace 24 per cent of Chicago's area, 18.5 per cent of its population, and 14.1 per cent of its assessed property, but they have at their disposal

⁸ The corporate status of the Lincoln Park District was challenged in an early case in which the Lincoln Park Act was differentiated from the acts creating the other two parks, because it went into effect without a popular referendum. See *The People v. City of Chicago*, 51 Ill. 17 (1869). In later cases interpreting the power and the municipal status of the Lincoln Park District, this distinction was not appealed to and Lincoln Park has been classed with South Park and West Park in respect to its status as a municipal corporation. See *The People v. Chicago Motor Bus Co.*, 295 Ill. 486 (1920).

only 11.3 per cent of Chicago's park district's acreage and as little as 5.3 per cent of Chicago's boulevards (Table XII). They vary widely in size and population. Edgebrook Park District has an area of less than one-half of a square mile and a population of about 350, while Northwest Park District embraces 10 square miles and 183,000 people. Their average size is only 2.66 square miles. Compared with the South Park or Lincoln Park districts, or even the West Chicago Park District, these supplementary units are poor in resources in proportion to population and area. Some are too small to provide even the most meager park facilities—Edison Park District, for instance, with a 1930 budget of but nine thousand dollars. Of relatively greater importance, are others such as Northwest Park District, with a budget approaching a half-million dollars.^{8a}

About all that can be said of the small parks of Chicago is that they vary in size and importance, but that every one of them is too small to meet the problem for which it has been organized. A few odd patches of territory in several locations in the city are with practically no park facilities at all and populations are dependent upon neighboring districts or upon whatever parks the city or school district may furnish in their vicinity. Approximately 8 per cent of the city is still untaxed for park-district purposes.

In the suburban section of Cook County, outside of Chicago, there are 34 more independent park districts, and scattered throughout the remainder of the Region there are some 14 more. All of these districts, it appears, have been organized under the Act of 1895 and are, therefore, parallel in organization and powers with the 19 small districts found within Chicago.⁹

The legal steps by which these minor park governments are organized do not interfere with district incorporations. It requires but one hundred voters to start the organizing machinery. After a formal hearing by the county judge, an election is held. If a majority of the votes cast at this election is in favor of its creation, the park district comes into being. The park commis-

^{8a} The estimated budgets are based upon figures for the 1930 tax extensions.

⁹ Four of these nineteen districts are on the city boundary line.

sion consists of five members, elected for six-year terms, with powers practically as broad as those granted to the three major park districts in Chicago.¹⁰

When organized, park districts are bodies "corporate and politic" and their commissioners are given managerial and ordinance-making power, including police powers over all parks, boulevards, and drives, and within three hundred feet on each side to permit the effective enforcement of park district ordinances. Tax levies are determined by a board of commissioners within a stipulated maxima, but this can be increased, in some instances, by referendum vote. Indebtedness may be incurred. In fact, park districts are invested with a relatively wide range of power over matters for which they are organized.¹¹

The 48 park districts outside of Chicago cover only a small part of the Region. But the legislature of Illinois has permitted the superimposition of an entirely different and overlapping set of political units with county-wide jurisdiction to be known as forest preserve districts. The avowed purpose of such districts is to conserve the rapidly disappearing virgin growths of woodland. Developments, however, show that forest preserve districts are assuming the functions of park districts in maintaining park facilities. At least this is true in Cook County where the forest preserve district has reached its greatest development. In fact, the Cook County Forest Preserve District is now engaged in building an elaborate zoölogical garden.

Three other counties, adjacent to Cook—DuPage, Kane, and Will—have been organized as forest preserve districts. The process of organization differs but slightly from the method of establishing park districts. Five hundred voters petition the circuit court, after which a referendum is held and the majority vote determines. Although the law permits districts smaller than a county, practice has followed the county area. Forest preserve

¹⁰ *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 105, secs. 256 ff.

¹¹ An act of 1893 provides for an additional type of park-providing government, known as "Pleasure Driveway and Park Districts." See *ibid.*, sec. 131. None of these appears in the known records of the Regional counties.

districts are authorized to instal and maintain police systems, although when district police are acting within the limits of any city, town, or village, such policemen are subject to the direction of the chief of police or marshal of such municipality. As may be expected, provision is made in the law for forest preserve districts to issue bonds and levy taxes. Such districts are under the control of the county commissioners acting *ex officio*. This provision was a salutary attempt to combine functions and increase responsibility rather than to increase the number of separate officials with a resulting dissipation of responsibility.

Park districts as independent units do not solve the metropolitan park problem. They are too small and too independent of each other and of other units of government. Forest preserve districts have been suggested as a possible escape from the difficulty, but no district limited to county boundaries can hope to attain a regional perspective and integrate the park resources within Chicagoland. The Cook County Forest Preserve does not assume the park powers previously exercised by municipalities, or park districts. It is a superimposition and not an integration of park-providing governments. Moreover, its powers are strictly limited. Nevertheless, forest preserve districts, coterminous with counties, are suggestions for the future. They are a recognition that the metropolitan park problem cannot be solved through little park district units and through the efforts of municipalities.

Impartial observation of the governmental machinery designed to administer parks and forests, on the one hand, and the sweep of the modern park problem, on the other, leads to the conclusion that park government has never been adjusted to changing metropolitan conditions. In addition to state, city, and school governments which control incidental park and recreation projects, there are in the Region a total of 74 independent governments created primarily for the purpose of maintaining park facilities for the inhabitants of the Metropolitan Area. In Cook County alone there are 57 separate units, including the Forest Preserve District. In Chicago itself, 3 large dis-

tricts and 19 smaller ones function side by side, perform the same services, maintain similar and overlapping organizations, and serve the people of the same community. Responsible for this multifarious system are 95 elected commissioners and 19 appointed commissioners in Chicago, a total of 299 in all of Cook County and more than 350 in the Region as a whole.

Among these officials and their independent park and forest districts is dissipated not only the power to maintain recreational facilities, but the power to police parks and highways, to protect life and property as well. In the center of the metropolis, Lincoln, South, and West parks constitute an excellent system of urban highways and boulevards, pleasure driveways and park sites, sport and educational facilities, administered by experts in the field of recreation, policed by forces whose daily services facilitate and protect one of the most constant and rapid lanes of motor traffic in the world. With integrated services and consolidated governmental organization, these three large park districts in the center of the Metropolitan Area can be made the nucleus of a system that would weld the scores of independent park districts and the more extensive forest districts into a public recreational system of Regional scope and world renown.

CHAPTER VIII

SANITARY DISTRICTS AND MOSQUITO GOVERNMENTS

To deal with the various phases of public sanitation, there has been established another series of independent governments in the Chicago Region. The list is long and varied. There are 11 sanitary districts, 190 drainage districts, 1 public health district, and even 4 sovereign mosquito abatement districts.¹ But these governments, 47 of them in Cook County alone, do not by themselves embrace the entire public sanitation function of the Metropolitan Area. Overlapping with them are scores of municipalities furnishing water and disposing of sewage; townships, counties, and even some school districts engaging in health services; and also independent state departments, remote from the metropolitan center, pursuing their functions with but little regard for the emerging interstate community on Lake Michigan.

The multiplicity of independent governments offers a striking contrast to the unified nature of the metropolitan sanitation problem. At its front door the Chicago Region has a fresh-water supply that is one of the most abundant and accessible in the world—a supply that furnishes water for 53 municipalities containing 4,154,740 inhabitants, or 85 per cent of the total population of the Region. But Lake Michigan is threatened by contamination resulting from the industrial wastes of the Calumet District and the raw untreated sewage of 225,000 people residing in a chain of separate municipalities along the shore of the lake from Michigan City, Indiana, to Kenosha, Wisconsin.² Nor does

¹ See Table III, *supra*, p. 9.

² Mr. Max White is now engaged at the University of Chicago in analyzing the water-supply systems of the Region. See also Robert F. Steadman, *Public Health Organization in the Chicago Region*, chap. xi.

the governmental structure take account of the topography³ of the Region. The country is flat and the streams are sluggish. Not only are Lake Michigan and the larger streams contaminated, but practically every one of the minor streams and bodies of water has already become, or is threatened with becoming, an open sewer or cesspool. The governments as they are now constituted do not have adequate powers to prevent this undesirable and unhealthy condition. Nothing need be added to make it obvious that municipalities alone, without some unifying and co-ordinating authority, can solve neither the sewage problem nor the health problem of the Metropolitan Region.

As a matter of fact, the growth of independent functional governments ranging from sanitary to mosquito districts is an admission that the traditional municipal structure is inadequate. The outstanding example and the center of this network of special governments is the Sanitary District of Chicago, a major government of more than local significance. The Sanitary District covers an area of 442 square miles, over twice the area of Chicago itself; it has spent a total of \$300,000,000 and its annual budget has exceeded seventy million dollars; it embraces 61 municipalities containing 3,901,569 inhabitants, or 80 per cent of the Region's population—truly a government of metropolitan dimensions.⁴

The Chicago Sanitary District was organized in 1889—a year in Chicago's history that was also marked by the annexation of several adjacent municipalities to the metropolis.⁵ Adopted by popular referendum, the Sanitary District Act provided for a governing board of nine trustees and granted the district power over drainage and sanitation and the usual powers of taxing, borrowing, and rule-making.⁶

The principal objective in organizing the District was to make Chicago's water supply clean by keeping its sewage out of Lake Michigan. This was accomplished by building a main channel

³ F. N. Fryxell, *The Physiography of the Region of Chicago*.

⁴ *Supra*, p. 20.

⁵ See also *infra*, pp. 55-57.

⁶ *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 42, sec. 320 ff.

from Lake Michigan to the Des Plaines River, reversing the flow of the Chicago River, and diverting the sewage down the Illinois River to the Mississippi. The North Branch of the Chicago River and the Calumet River had also to be included within the drainage scheme since they drained sections of Chicago. Consequently, two collateral channels, the North Shore and the Calumet-Sag, were built. To make the main and collateral channels effective, a network of intercepting sewers and pumping stations were constructed to serve the numerous sections and municipalities within the District.⁷

To this elaborate construction program there was added a system of sewage treatment. The original plan called for the conveyance of all sewage to the canals and dilution with sufficient lake water. With the growth of population and industry in Chicago and its suburbs, it soon became evident that dilution had to be supplemented by sewage treatment. As a consequence, the District not only operates its elaborate channel, sewer, and pumping works, but it also treats some domestic sewage and is slowly developing a program of treating industrial wastes as well.

But the District has gone far beyond the sanitation problem.⁸ It has a hand in the shipping and navigation problem as well. As one of the links in the Mississippi Waterway, now in the course of development, docks and terminals built along its right of way form an intimate part of the lakes-to-gulf navigation project. The District's sewage program has necessarily included the construction of locks and dams in the southwestern part of the Region at Lockport, in Will County. In order to facilitate shipping, the flow of water and sewage must be controlled at this point. Moreover, the main channel was built of suitable dimensions for navigation, the South Branch of the Chicago River was dredged and improved, and bridges were made movable in order to permit the passage of lake- and ocean-going vessels.

⁷ Mr. Langdon Pearse, chief sanitary engineer for the Chicago Sanitary District, furnished this information concerning the engineering activities of the District.

⁸ Cf. the activities of the Port of New York Authority (*infra*, pp. 162-64).

As another by-product, the District has constructed and now operates a power-house to utilize the water power resulting from the annual average flow of 8,200 cubic feet per second. From this flow there is available an average horse-power of 20,000, lighting approximately 93,000 Chicago street lamps, 30,000 lamps in South, West, and Lincoln parks and in the city of Blue Island, and 25,000 miscellaneous lamps, including those of the Sanitary District itself.

In its recent history, the District has taken over a number of other activities that have in some instances been the occasion for local and national notoriety. Its police department, discontinued in 1929, expended a half-million dollars in 1928; its health department, discontinued at the end of the year 1928, spent a quarter of a million in the same year.⁹ It has constructed a costly motor driveway, McCormick Boulevard, lined with a beautiful lighting system, at the expense of almost two million dollars, and a cinder bridle path costing over a million.¹⁰

However, the Sanitary District is, in spite of its defects, one of the few *ad hoc* governments of metropolitan proportions in the United States. With jurisdiction over sixty-one separate municipalities, it performs services for almost four million people who would be denied, under the historic system of local government, the joint resources, the lower service costs, and the more comprehensive engineering and planning of the larger district.

Yet there are limitations to the effectiveness with which the Sanitary District can respond to the needs of the Metropolitan Region. Perhaps the greatest of these is the barrier set up by the Indiana state line which cuts through the very heart of the Region by extending southward from the lake at the eastern limits of Chicago and of the Sanitary District. The District has seen to it that sewage from Chicago and its Illinois suburbs does

⁹ Sanitary District of Chicago, *Annual Appropriation Bill*, 1932, pp. 15-16. The police department expended \$491,456.00; the health department, \$249,758.82.

¹⁰ Auditor's report printed in *Chicago Tribune*, December 30, 1931. The cost of the bridle path was \$1,068,861.91.

not enter Lake Michigan, but as it has no authority across the state line, the Indiana municipalities are not prevented from polluting the lake.

Through the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal at East Chicago, the Grand Calumet River empties in part into Lake Michigan, and part of the flow of the Little Calumet, too, goes into the lake through Burn's Ditch, east of Gary. According to the direction of the winds and the intensity of storms, the lake levels are influenced and the flow into the lake may be temporarily increased at East Chicago, or the Calumet may be reversed at South Chicago. From these outlets, sewage from 125,000 people and wastes from the industrial plants in the Indiana Calumet District, the workshop of the Middle West, pollute the water supply of Chicago and its suburbs.¹¹ The polluted matter is carried by wind-induced movement to the cribs off Chicago's shore line, and, at intervals, taste-producing pollution has been identified as far north as Winnetka. The situation becomes even more ironic when it is realized that the municipalities in the Indiana Calumet District, where this pollution originates, direct part of their sewage through the Calumet-Sag Channel into the main channel of the Sanitary District of Chicago, which was organized for the express purpose of preventing the pollution of Lake Michigan. Eighty per cent of the Region's population finds its water supply polluted by less than 3 per cent, and no governmental agency has been authorized to settle the problem.

The Indiana state line is not the only jurisdictional obstacle which restricts the Chicago Sanitary District. Within Illinois a barrier has been reached at the Lake County line on the north and the DuPage County line on the west. At both places the District has been stopped, although population forms a solid

¹¹ In 1927, the United States Public Health Service estimated that 2,400,000 gallons containing organic matter and 7,000,000 gallons containing objectionable taste-producing compounds enter Lake Michigan daily, and more than 90 per cent of this comes from the Indiana Calumet District (*Public Health Bull.* 170). The Division of Water Safety Control of the City of Chicago points out that in spite of the curtailment in industrial activity since 1927, the situation has not improved, primarily because wastes from Calumet oil refineries have greatly increased since 1930.

mass of incorporated area beyond the center of Du Page County and well north into Lake County. To be sure, seven extensions have expanded the District's territory from its original area of 185 square miles to 442 square miles.¹² But growth has not kept pace with the development of Chicago's suburbs.

Instead, there have cropped up satellite sanitary districts. Physically contiguous but governmentally independent are 4 other districts, while 6 others, isolated but close by, bring the total number of separate sanitary districts in the Region to 11. Experience with the Sanitary District of Chicago evidently convinced the Legislature of the feasibility of this special type of government and three subsequent acts were passed permitting the organization of other districts by a referendum process.¹³ These differ from the Chicago District in territory since they cover a restricted scope, in no case more than eight municipalities. Their powers, too, are less extensive and they also vary in the method of selecting trustees. The act under which the North Shore Sanitary District was organized, for example, provides for the appointment of 5 trustees from 5 wards of the district by a board of commissioners consisting of the county judge, and 2 circuit judges.¹⁴

The North Shore District, second to the Chicago District in the magnitude of its undertaking, touches the Chicago District at the Cook County line and extends along the lake front through the whole length of Lake County to the Wisconsin state line. Adjacent to the Chicago District on the southwest is the Indiana Boundary Sanitary District, and on the west is the Hinsdale District, which is in turn adjacent to the Downers Grove District. Recent disconnections of territory have removed the Lincoln Highway Sanitary District on the south and the Salt Creek Drainage Basin District on the west from their contiguous rela-

¹² The District was enlarged in 1903, 1913, 1917, 1919, 1921, and 1927. In each year the statute required a referendum except in 1927, when one of the two enlarging acts passed during that year extended the District by legislative fiat. See *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 42, sec. 380c.

¹³ *Ibid.*, secs. 247, 277, 299.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 279.

tionship with the Chicago Sanitary District. The remaining 4 districts are the Wheaton District in DuPage County, the Aurora District, and the Elgin District in the Fox River Valley section of Kane County, and the Bloom Township Sanitary District in southern Cook County.

While some of these districts in their capacities as independent governments respond satisfactorily to the needs of the outlying sections of the Region, the smaller ones especially do not fit into a planned organization for metropolitan sanitation. For example, the outlets for the smaller districts of southern Cook County must necessarily be the Calumet-Sag Channel which belongs to the Sanitary District of Chicago, and the engineers of these districts are therefore planning to connect with the Chicago District's works. Having limited resources, the minor districts look to the Chicago District to construct and operate part of the necessary works, and the engineers of the Chicago District, realizing the Regional nature of the sanitation problem and anticipating ultimate annexation of the neighboring districts, have recommended that the District build "gift" sewers to accommodate their neighbors.¹⁵

Under the present system, sanitary districts, like other local governments, may be created by local initiative with little regard for their relationship with the surrounding political structure, and there is therefore no assurance that these minor, inadequately planned units will not continue to multiply in the Metropolitan Area. Nor is there any assurance that the metropolitan system of drainage will not be subject to an additional layer of government—a type that may turn out to be even more ambitious in scope than the sanitary district. An act passed in 1925 permits the establishment of "River Conservancy Districts" in order to control river systems having drainage areas of at least 50 square miles for the purpose of "river control, sanitation, development of water supply, navigation and protection of fish

¹⁵ Sanitary District of Chicago, *Chief Engineer's Report and Recommendations*, 1928, p. 54.

life."¹⁶ No conservancy districts have yet been organized in the Metropolitan Area, but the plan was almost successful in the western part of the Region, where the proposed Fox River Valley Conservancy District was defeated by a referendum vote.

In contrast to the projected conservancy districts, to the minor and medium-sized sanitary governments, and to the giant Sanitary District of Chicago there is a checkerboard of minute drainage districts overlapping the Region. The drainage district was, in fact, the historic sanitary district, designed to drain farm lands; and as a commentary on the hesitancy of legal changes affecting the metropolitan community, it is interesting to note that the statutes relating to sanitary districts are merely subsections under the general chapter on drainage districts. In the whole Region there are 190 of these independent units; in Cook County alone there are 40.

Drainage districts are of widely varying size. There are some with but 340¹⁷ acres and one with 17,920 acres¹⁸ extending well into two counties. There are districts of such antiquity that they exist as legal specters, although the great majority have come into being quite recently. In fact, of the 190 districts accounted for, 38 were organized before 1900, 46 between 1900 and 1910, 60 between 1910 and 1920, and 46 since 1920. Districts are even being organized over areas which are included in forgotten districts that have never been formally dissolved.¹⁹

It is almost impossible to determine with accuracy either the legal origin or the precise number of drainage districts. Fifty out of 188 Illinois districts could not be allocated to any particular law as the sanction for their existence. Thirty-seven were organized under an act of 1879, 95 under an act of 1885, and 6 others exist as voluntary or mutual districts, organized by contract

¹⁶ *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 42, secs. 383 ff.

¹⁷ Rockville No. 2 in Kankakee County.

¹⁸ Coral-Grafton in Kane and McHenry counties.

¹⁹ The most reliable and comprehensive treatment of drainage districts in Illinois was made by G. W. Pickels and F. B. Leonard, *Illinois State Geological Survey Bull.* 42 (1921).

among the parties concerned. Because the true story of these governmental relics cannot be told without an examination of county, township, and even justice-court records, many of which have long been lost, it is highly probable that there are several drainage districts in the Region which have not been located, and it is also probable that several of the districts counted have long ceased to operate.

There has been much agitation for simplification and reorganization of the drainage laws of the state, but to no effect as yet. The drainage district as a unit of government is far too small and uncorrelated to be of much use to an expanding metropolis. The lack of systematic records upon which even a system of unofficial co-operation might be based and the fact that the Region exists as a coherent unit and is gradually supplanting the farms of the suburban area make the continued existence of these districts in their independent and unrelated form an anomaly of metropolitan government.

Of more recent vintage than drainage districts is the lone public health district of the Region. Coterminous with the city and the township of Berwyn, the Berwyn Public Health District is the third of a triple layer of local governments with identical geographical jurisdiction. While the District's governing officials are the regular township officers acting in an *ex officio* capacity, it has a separate staff of public health officials, it exercises independent taxing and governing powers, and it may even issue tax anticipation warrants.²⁰ The existing governments, of course, have adequate health and sanitation powers, but another unit had to be added to the Regional rolls partly because the local tax rate would not provide sufficient revenue in terms of the relatively low assessment ratio and it was necessary to superimpose a new local government in order to permit the township unit to continue paying its low proportionate share of larger jurisdiction taxes. While the Berwyn District is the only existing health district in the Region, others may in the future come into

²⁰ *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 111½, sec. 19.

being by the relatively flexible system of petition and referendum.²¹

But the riddles of metropolitan sanitation governments have not yet been exhausted. In 1927 the legislature of Illinois authorized the establishment of independent mosquito abatement districts. Brought into being by the usual process of petition and referendum, the mosquito abatement district is governed by a board of 5 trustees appointed by the county judge. Although the sole and humble function of the mosquito district is the "extermination of mosquitoes, flies or other insects," it is constituted by the statute "a body corporate and politic."²² With all of its references to independent capacity and corporate powers, the statutes cannot hide the obvious fact that the mosquito district, like the health district, is a makeshift superimposed upon governments that already have the power to deal with the elusive mosquito. For the act specifically declares that the district's power to abate mosquitoes is "subject to the paramount control of the municipal or other public authorities."²³

Fortunately, mosquito abatement districts are luxuries of local government that have been established only by the wealthiest suburbs of Metropolitan Chicago. Four districts have been created in the Region. In Cook County, Oak Park and surrounding villages have established the Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District, and Evanston and her neighbors have established the North Shore Mosquito Abatement District. In Lake County, the Lake Forest and the Highland Park Mosquito Abatement districts have been created. The last three districts comprise a chain of contiguous territory reaching twenty miles along the Gold Coast of Lake Michigan from the northern limits of the city of Chicago, but they pursue their sovereign duties independently of each other, spreading oil upon infested spots along Lake Michigan and the Skokie Valley where the dangerous mosquito breeds and flourishes.

The mosquito abatement district is but the political carica-

²¹ *Ibid.*, secs. 2-10.

²² *Ibid.*, secs. 80, 77.

²³ *Ibid.*, sec. 80.

ture of the entire system of metropolitan governments engaged in public sanitation. Running through the list of such governments in the Chicago Region, there are 11 sanitary districts, 190 drainage districts, 1 public health district, and 4 mosquito abatement districts. In large measure these governments are functionally related but their work remains unorganized; the community to which they are responsible is one, but their jurisdictional areas are many. Their powers are concurrent with many of the independent municipalities which they overlap, but they are completely independent in their corporate existence and in their practical activities. Whether a reorganized metropolitan unit will take the form of another *ad hoc* body combining most or all of the functions of the existing sanitary, drainage, health, and mosquito governments, or whether it will be a general unit of government serving the sanitary as well as the other public needs of the community, remains to be seen. That some coordinated form, more attuned to the Metropolitan Area, must make its appearance is hardly to be doubted.

CHAPTER IX

A THOUSAND SCHOOL GOVERNMENTS

If the foundation and safeguard of democracy is equality of educational opportunity, something of a shock must be felt when the facts of the Chicago Area are considered. The basis and much of the detail of the present Illinois educational organization was laid in 1825, eight years before Chicago was incorporated. In the other states of the Region the basic school organization is of pre-Civil War origin. Few, if any, better examples of an antiquated governmental structure vainly and ineffectively trying to cope with a social situation for which it was never designed can be imagined than the 978 independent school districts of the Region, with 195 in Cook County alone.

A few of the suburban districts, like Gary, Indiana, and Winnetka, Illinois, have achieved fame for advanced educational experimentation. Such districts are exceptions—bright spots in a myriad of unheard-of school units. There are nearly 600 one-room schoolhouses within the gateway of America's second city. Sixteen districts are so unimportant that they maintain no school at all, providing tuition for their children to enter neighboring districts. Nine others struggle along with schools having fewer than 5 students each. Sixty-two others have "student bodies" of 10 or less.

The average district, outside of Chicago, has fewer than 200 students. In the median district is to be found a single-room schoolhouse, generally built during a past generation, stove-heated, with a bare minimum of equipment, provided with an underpaid teacher who does her own janitor work and is handicapped by school terms measurably shorter than that of more fortunate neighbors.

There are sixteen separate and distinct types of local school districts within the Chicago Region, comprising in all a total of

978 districts. The present system requires 3,342 distinct officials, an average of 3.5 per district. Each district, moreover, is subject to at least one, and outside of Indiana to two, local supervisory governmental bodies, of which there are 150 in the Region. There is, in other words, one supervisory unit for every 6.5 local districts. The 150 supervisory units are governed by 535 officials—an average of 3.5 supervising officials to each one, making each local district subject to the supervision and control of 4 officials on the average.¹ And all these officials are either elected directly by the voters or are but one step removed, being appointed by some local governing body which is elected. The entire system of governing personnel is unprofessional, except for county superintendents.

Political boundary lines divide district from district and, in so doing, run through solid masses of populated suburban territory. The ideal of educational equality of opportunity is certainly not attained within Chicagoland. Nor are school governments coterminous with natural areas of local loyalties and interests either in the rapidly developing suburban area or in the metropolis itself.

The city of Chicago constitutes a single and practically independent school district, as far as internal control is concerned. It is largely separate from the city government, although its board of 11 members is appointed by the mayor of the city and sanctioned by the City Council but not removable by them. But once this appointment is concluded, the board becomes practically sovereign in administrative matters. So distinct from the municipal government is the school district that it can borrow money from the city, and be sued by the city for failure to comply with its ordinances.² If its teachers go for months unpaid, the city is not technically responsible; and indeed the city and the Board of Education may be at war.

¹ These figures are based upon a study on "The Public Schools of Metropolitan Chicago" by Portia Parratt (Master's thesis, University of Chicago's Library).

² *City of Chicago vs. Board of Education*, 246 Ill. App. 405.

Not only is the school district of Chicago independent from the city, but it also is practically independent from the county superintendent, whose supervision is limited to districts outside of Chicago. Moreover, it is largely independent from the control of the state superintendent of public instruction. The state legislature has granted the Chicago district special privileges in determining its own textbooks, in setting standards for teachers' qualifications and for examinations, and in general administrative control and policy determining powers. In fact, the Chicago district is much less restricted by state legislation than most of the other school districts of the Region.

In the scope of its undertakings, Chicago's school district is really in a class by itself when ranged alongside of the other districts which surround its borders. It is served by over 17,000 employees and educators,³ and provides educational facilities for a half-million students,⁴ from kindergarten through three years of college. With the resources of the whole community at its command, a specialization in curriculum and a variety of facilities for abnormal children is possible, which must be denied the suburban districts under the present structural set-up. Although the suburban districts are given to deriding the great colossus at their doors, it is still a fact that Chicago's school system sets standards by which suburban districts measure their own efficiency.

Once the political boundaries of Chicago are crossed, a very different school organization is encountered. Hundreds of local units cover the suburban area. There is absolutely no official interrelationship between "school" Chicago and its suburban area. Each state centers educational supervision and regulation in its own capital; and the suburban school districts of Chicago are at the bases of three loosely constructed pyramids, each finding its summit in a distant state capital where metropolitan problems

³ In spite of recent drastic budgetary reductions, there were 13,939 teachers and 3,207 other employees on the school board's rolls in September, 1932.

⁴ In September, 1932, there were 499,060 persons enrolled in the Chicago schools and 19,842 in evening schools in addition.

are submerged. In brief, the suburban school districts of Chicago are part of the rurally conceived and rurally adapted school organization of three states. The fact that their problems have become more intimately identified with the metropolis than with the rural hinterlands of their respective states finds no place in the picture of governmental organization.

In Cook County outside of Chicago there are some 224 school authorities independent of each other governed by some 1,000 officials. These authorities include the Cook County superintendent of education, 28 school townships, 176 elementary-school districts, and 17 secondary-school districts, and one non-high-school district.⁵

That this wilderness of school governments might be simplified with an increase in public service is very likely. (1) One thousand officials might be replaced by one school board or committee, and (2) the school government itself might be affiliated with that of the regional government whatever form it may take eventually. From the point of view of both educational standards and fiscal administration, there are material gains to be made by the consolidation of these haphazard systems under one Chicago or Cook County organization.

Outside of Cook County and still within the State of Illinois there are almost 800 other school agencies independent in position. Over 660 of these are elementary-school districts; about 100 are school townships; and about 40 are secondary-school districts. The total number of supervising officials is over 2,500, by far the greater number of whom are locally elected.⁶ Practically all of the school districts in Illinois are organized under the general laws of the state. Three large districts outside of Chicago—Waukegan, Joliet, and Lake Forest—are governed by special charters granted in Civil War days.

In order to meet the difficulty inherent in the small local school district, the Illinois legislature passed an act in 1917 authorizing consolidation of local districts.⁷ The consolidated district plan

⁵ *Supra*, Table III.

⁶ Figures taken from study by Portia Parratt.

⁷ *Laws of Illinois*, 1917, pp. 733-34.

must be initiated by local petition and adopted by referendum.⁸ The obvious intention of the legislation was to permit the reorganization of the school system in terms of modern transportation facilities and educational techniques. Although there are examples of consolidated districts in different parts of the Region, the movement, which depends upon local initiative, has been considerably less popular than its adherents hoped it would be. Consolidation is not taking place with sufficient rapidity to keep pace with the increase of suburban population and the improvements of motorized transportation.

High schools are maintained by four types of districts. Thirty-one "township high-school districts" have been organized, and thirty-one "community high-school districts" have been designed with particular attention to communities that cross township lines. Both these types of districts are organized at local instigation and have the ordinary governmental powers to levy taxes and incur indebtedness. A few elementary-school districts in Illinois maintain high schools. Barrington has such a school. Usually such districts maintain less than a four-year course and have difficulty in offering a rounded curriculum. Finally, each county has a non-high-school district, containing all the territory in the county not organized under a regular high-school district, and governed by an elected board and the county superintendent acting *ex officio*. These districts send their students to the schools of the existing high-school districts and reimburse them from taxes assessed against property in non-high-school district territory.⁹

As the great majority of the school population lives in Illinois, it may be asked: What is the supervisory system of this section of the Region? Each of the tiny districts has its own special interest in "township funds," which are remnants of grants from the federal government when the land was opened for settlement and which have remained in the custody of the township treasurer. This antiquated functionary is elected by the trustees of the school township, who, in turn, are elected at the township

⁸ *Illinois Revised Statutes*, 1931, chap. 122, secs. 86-88.

⁹ *Ibid.*, secs. 101-3.

meeting.¹⁰ The township treasurer is custodian of the township fund and of the moneys derived from the state school distributive fund. In some of the larger townships, these funds amount to a considerable sum. During the school year 1931-32, the Cook County school districts outside of Chicago derived over \$585,000 from the State fund and in one township adjacent to Chicago, the old township fund now amounts to a half million dollars.¹¹ However, most of the old funds under the treasurer's control have long since disappeared or dwindled to a few hundred dollars. Why this officer has not long since been discarded in favor of a more comprehensive and efficient method of handling school funds may well be asked.

The township treasurer is not the only officer of the township with his finger in the educational pie. The title to school property ordinarily is vested in the trustees of the school township, whose functions are as insignificant as those of the treasurer. They act in a ministerial capacity in approving the distribution of township funds. In addition they must perform the solemn duty of paying the treasurer, paying for the cost of publishing their annual report, and buying "a record book, if any."¹²

In practice, the county superintendent is the most important cog in the supervisory system in Illinois. Although he is an elected official, usually in office through the good graces of his political party, he is required to have a professional training and educational experience.¹³ With power to require reports and inspect records of local and township school affairs, with authority to give teachers' examinations, issue teachers' certificates, and inspect school buildings, and with influence in the selection of teaching personnel, the county superintendent is the strongest co-ordinating influence in the system.¹⁴

The Indiana section of the Metropolitan Area adds to the Illinois school structure some 57 separate township, city, and

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 67.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, secs. 71, 72. Financial data obtained from Cook County superintendent of schools.

¹² *Ibid.*, sec. 35.

¹³ *Ibid.*, sec. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 15.

town school districts, governed by 79 officials and 5 county supervisory units with 5 more officers. In the Wisconsin section there are 20 independent districts, with 64 officials, 4 supervisory school townships with 12 officials, and one supervisory county board of education with 6 members.

In addition, a private school system has developed in the Region. Over 600 private schools exist in the Metropolitan Area, serving more than 200,000 students. Many of these are organized under ecclesiastical auspices, but others are under the direction of non-sectarian groups of various types.

The public school system of the Metropolitan Area is clearly in a state of incoherency and disorganization. First of all, school government is separated from other governments, independently chosen, organized, and financed. Roughly, school governments, spend about one-third of the total public expenditures of the Region.¹⁵ But there is no adequate working relation between school and non-school governments; no co-ordination, co-operation, or joint endeavor to pool their common efforts for the public service.

Then, school government is split up into almost 1,000 independent school governments, over against some 600 other governments also independently chosen, organized, and financed. In Cook County alone there are 195 school governments set over against the 224 other governments within the county.

In the main, all these school governments are independent of everything except the state legislature and the courts; but in so far as there is administrative supervision over them, it is split up among the superintendents of 15 counties, and the superintendents of 3 states, with headquarters at Springfield, Indianapolis, and Madison. This is not a regional school system, but a description of chaos.

Whatever may have been the merits of the independent school district in some earlier period of our history, there can be no doubt that modern urban conditions have rendered the older plan obsolete, expensive, and inefficient. It lingers, not because we want it, but because we do not see a way out of the maze.

¹⁵ *Infra*, Table XVII, p. 113.

